

ABSTRACT

An apparatus and method for enabling the remote printing or storing or sharing, at a node in a data communications network, of digital images from an image data source provided by a customer and of identifying information, the identifying information stored in a storage component in the apparatus. The apparatus comprises means for accessing one image or a plurality of images from the image data source, means for automatically determining a closest entry point into the data communications network, and means for transmitting the image or plurality of images and the customer identifying information, through the entry point, to a remote node of the network. Methods to ensure the efficient and reliable transmission are disclosed. Databases for maintaining, at a remote location, image data provided by a customer and other data relating to the customer and for enabling the sharing of image products are also disclosed.